



Agricenter International

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Agricenter International Solar Array to "Go Live"

Memphis, Tennessee Tuesday, April 3, 2012 - Agricenter International, long known for turning sunshine into bales of cotton and bushels of grain, will now be converting sunshine into electricity, thanks to its new 1 megawatt solar farm.

The official grand opening ceremony of Agricenter's solar farm will take place on the east side of the array at 1:30 p.m. on April 11, 2012.

The 998,400-watt photovoltaic system sits on five acres and will generate 1.6 gigawatt-hours annually, which is enough energy to power 107 homes for one year. Over 25 years, the solar farm will offset 38,350 tons of carbon dioxide, 100 tons of nitrous oxide, and 200 tons of sulfur dioxide. This is the equivalent of taking 5,000 automobiles off the road or planting 7,500 acres of trees.

Agricenter's solar farm is the largest in the state to include a solar tracking system. The system, from Array Technologies, allows the solar modules to track the movement of the sun to increase solar electricity production by up to 20 percent. The Solar Array is powered by 4,160 Sharp solar modules, made in Memphis.

The \$4.3 million project was engineered, designed and installed by LightWave Solar, financed by Silicon Ranch and integrated into the power grid by Memphis Light Gas and Water and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Silicon Ranch, which is owned by former Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen, is paying to construct the array and will own it. The company plans to sell power to MLGW. For each kilowatt of electricity produced, it will receive a TVA subsidy of 12 cents above market rate.

In 10 years, Agricenter will be given an option to purchase the array.

"It gives us 10 years to look at what it's doing," said Agricenter President John Charles Wilson. "If it's making money like it's planned to do, it'll be an easy decision to make."

The solar farm will be a vital part of Agricenter's education mission, according to Wilson. Visitors can tour the solar farm, and electronic displays in the Agricenter lobby will display how much power is being generated.

There will be a tour of the facility prior to the grand opening (beginning at 12:45 pm). All of the events are free and open to the public. The solar farm is north of Smythe Farm Road, which can be accessed from both Walnut Grove Rd., and S. Germantown Parkway. Public parking for the event will be in the South Parking Lot of Agricenter's Expo Center. Buses will transport guests to and from the Commissioning/Reception Ceremony.

Agricenter International, located at 7777 Walnut Grove Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38120, is a self-sustaining, not-for-profit (501c3) organization that provides economic development and improved quality of life by facilitating agricultural research, educational programs, environmental conservation, natural area preservation and recreational opportunities.

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